manufactured products, accruing from a high statistical base in the corresponding period in 2008. Despite the fall in overall inflation, inflation in essential commodities continues to remain high, on account of lower agricultural production in some crops, increase in the minimum support prices and growth in demand.

Housing loan interest rate

303. SHRIMATI T. RATNABAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any proposal to give loans at the rate of 6.5 per cent for the housing sector to boost its image;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what is the present status of loans for the housing sector for loan amount of rupees 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 lakhs in each State especially in Andhra Pradesh where the people of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe are demanding to give loans at low level?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) There is no proposal of the Government to give loans at the rate of 6.5% for the housing sector at present. Rates of interest above Rs.2 lakh are deregulated and are determined by the banks themselves.

(d) Data on loans for the housing sector in the manner desired is not being maintained by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). However, keeping in mind the interests of the common man, an incentive package was announced for the housing sector on 16.12.2008 by the Indian Banks Association (IBA) under which the public sector banks are providing new housing loans up to Rs.5 lakhs at a rate of interest which is not to exceed 8.5% p.a. for the first five years. For housing loans from Rs.5 lakhs to Rs. 20 lakhs, the rate of interest is not to exceed 9.25% per annum for the first five years. As a further incentive, there are no processing charges, no pre-payment charges/penalty and a free insurance cover is to be provided to the borrower for the entire amount of outstanding loan.

Agriculture Credit

304. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Public Sector Banks achieved the envisaged agriculture credit target of Rs. 250000 crores during the fiscal 2008-2009;

(b) if so, what are the projected targets of agriculture credit for 2009-2010;

(c) whether the repayments schedules are maintained;

(d) if not, what is the percentage of non-payments by farmers; and

(e) whether the percentage of repayments for agriculture credit and industrial credit is same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) As against the agriculture lending target of Rs. 1,95,000 crore set for the year 2008-09, the domestic commercial banks, including Public Sector banks, have lent Rs. 2,23,668 crore to the agriculture sector.

(b) The Government has enhanced the target of agricultural credit flow to Rs. 3,25,000 crore, by all banks, for the year 2009-10.

(c) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha.

Monopolistic capitalism in industrial sectors

†305.SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister on more than one occasion has accepted that due to provision of special facilities in certain industrial areas monopolistic capitalism is emerging;

(b) whether this has resulted in increase in regional economic inequality and economic imbalance;

(c) whether as a result of increasing tendency of globalization India's basic small and medium industry is contracting;

(d) whether as a result of efforts made with reference to global recession this trend has increased further; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) In a speech made in the Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID), New Delhi, in May 2007, the Hon'ble Prime Minister drew attention to a comment in the media that most of the billionaires among India's top business leaders operate in oligopolistic markets, and in sectors where the government has conferred special privileges on a few. He also stressed the need to find credible policy solutions to help reduce regional imbalances in industrial development.

(c) to (e) In the wake of global financial crisis, representations have been received from micro and small enterprises (MSEs) associations highlighting problems with regard to credit squeeze, high rates of interest, reduction in orders and delayed payment by big enterprises. Keeping in view the impact of global recession on MSMEs, the Government, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Public Sector Banks have taken several measures for providing a stimulus to the MSMEs which, *inter alia*, include: (i) extending the loan limit under Credit Guarantee Scheme from Rs. 50 lakh to Rs. 1 crore

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.